

Message Text

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41

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 DPW-01 DHA-02 SS-15 PM-04

NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 L-03 /070 W

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R 141300Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4765

INFO DIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 6052

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MASS, PFOR, SY

SUBJECT: JNA OFFICER'S VIEWS ON SYRIA; SYRIANS ALLEDGEDLY
HOLDING AMERICAN POW'S

1. A YUGOSLAV ARMY (JNA) OFFICER, WHO APPARENTLY HAS
GOOD ENTRE IN SYRIAN ARMY CIRCLES, GAVE NAVAL ATTACHE
SOME OF HIS IMPRESSIONS FROM HIS JUST-COMPLETED 18TH
VISIT TO SYRIA.

2. YUGOSLAV CLAIMS THAT SYRIAN PRISONS ARE STILL
HOLDING US PILOTS CAPTURED DURING OCTOBER WAR. ATTACHE
EXPRESSED DISBELIEF, BUT YUGOSLAV WAS ADAMANT:
"THEY ARE DEFINITELY US PILOTS, BUT UITHOUT (US)
PASSPORTS."

3. YUGOSLAV CAME AWAY WITH IMPRESSION THAT GOS IS
BECOMING MORE RESPONSIBLE, EFFECTIVE AND OPEN, THROUGH
IT IS STILL UNDER CHALLENGE FROM RADICAL ELEMENTS.
FROM HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH SYRIAN OFFICERS, YUGOSLAV
BELIEVES THAT SYRIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD ISRAEL ARE
SLOWLY CHANGING. WHILE
ON EARLIER VISITS THEY WOULDN'T
EVEN MENTION ISRAEL BY NAME, THEY NOW ACKNOWLEDGE ITS
EXISTENCE. HE SAID SYRIANS ARE DETERMINED TO RECOVER
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40 KM STRIP FROM ISRAELIS ON GOLAN HEIGHTS AND
PREDICTED THAT THIS WOULD BE A DIFFICULT NEGOTIATING

PROBLEM IF TALKS ARE OPENED ON A FURTHER GOLAN
DISENGAGEMENT.

4. SYRIAN OFFICERS EXPRESSED CONCERN TO YUGOSLAV
OVER "FRAGMENTATION" OF ARAB COMMUNITY, PRESUMABLY A
REFERENCE TO DIFFERENCES AMONG ARAB STATES OVER
SINAI II.

5. JNA OFFICER WAS OF IMPRESSION THAT SYRIAN ARMED
FORCES ARE NOW MORE EFFECTIVELY ORGANIZED. HE SAID
THEY ARE RECEIVING "HUGE AMOUNTS" OF SOVIET EQUIPMENT,
THE NEWEST OF WHICH HE WAS NOT SHOWN.

6. COMMENT: WE ARE UNABLE TO EVALUATE OFFICER'S
INFORMATION BUT REPORT IT AS OF POSSIBLE INTEREST
TO ADDRESSEES.
SILBERMAN

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